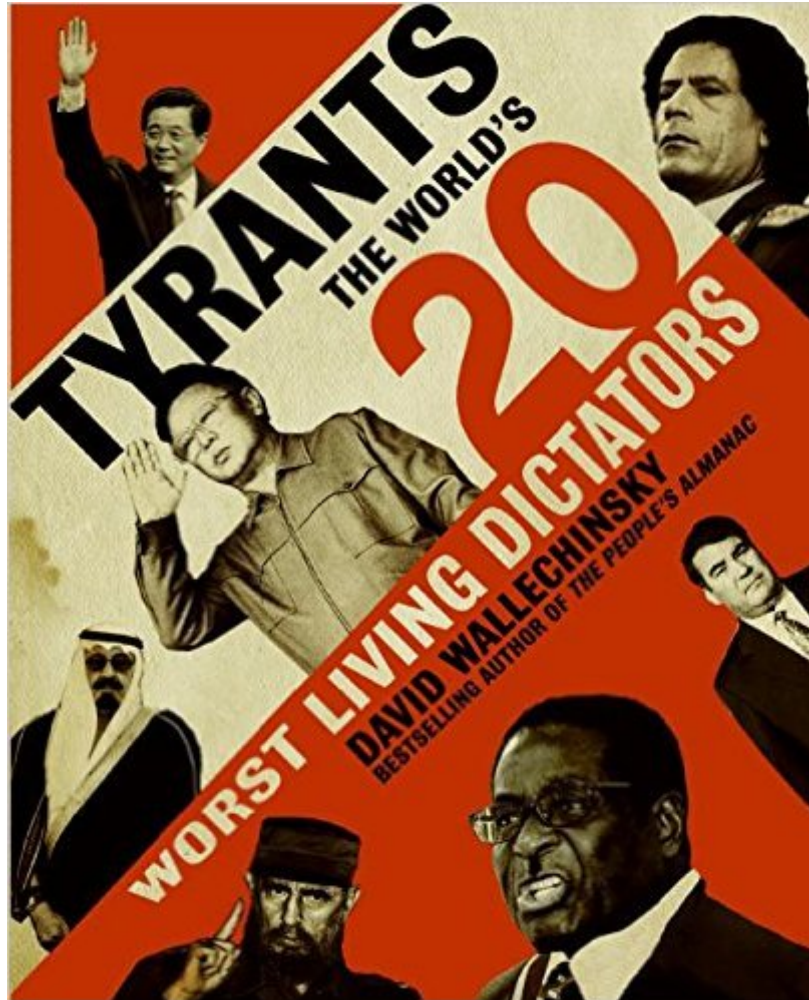


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Tyrants: The World's 20 Worst Living Dictators



Synopsis

Today more than ever, international headlines are dominated by dispatches from the many dictatorships that still dot the globe. Although Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has been deposed, North Korea's Kim Jong-il continues to attract attention on the world stage; at the same time, other dictatorships, led by royal families, military juntas, and single political parties, persist in repressing and brutalizing their citizens without ever attracting anything like Saddam's or Kim Jong-il's level of international attention. In this fascinating, eye-opening read, New York Times bestselling author David Wallechinsky offers in-depth portraits of each of the twenty worst dictators -- and the governments they head -- currently in power: exposing their crimes, and revealing their strange personalities and mysterious backgrounds. Tyrants also reveals the extent that foreign corporations and governments support these tyrants despite their policies. Timely and provocative, crafted with the popular touch that has made Wallechinsky a bestselling author, Tyrants will awaken you to the criminal regimes of the present -- and pose challenging questions about America's role in curbing (or promoting) their power in the future. The Tyrant Hall of Shame includes: Kim Jong-il/North Korea, Hu Jintao/China, Seyed Ali Khamenei/Iran, King Abdullah/Saudi Arabia, Muammar al-Qaddafi/Libya, Omar al-Bashir/Sudan, Islam Karimov/Uzbekistan, Saparmurat Niyazov/Turkmenistan, Fidel Castro/Cuba.

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Customer Reviews

The book DOES mention our current President George W. Bush, but not as a dictator; just as an

example of how some powers, even in somewhat more privileged nations, can be abused. The author merely compared the president's quotes and actions to those of the book's noted dictators. As a matter of fact, Bush is on the 21st chapter of the book (which is titled "A Special Case" meaning he's not included in the 20 living dictators as implied by the title), and at the beginning and end of the chapter, the author clearly states "George Bush is not a dictator". Sure, it's likely the author has an agenda against Bush, but who the heck doesn't? The United States is a free-speech country (so says the First Amendment), and the book was published in the United States. So shame on YOU for being so bias!! You practically spit on your own constitution!! Besides, the main issue the book discloses is the other TWENTY dictators around the world. The heck with Bush's entry at the end of the book! What's important is to know about what the reality is around the world! Just in case, this book is not overly about conspiracy, and tells us pretty much the facts about living dictators that an average person could have never put together just by using the news and internet as a source of information. To simplify what I'm trying to say, this book is smart, precise, and concise. It even tells us about the history of the countries suffering under an abusive rule, and how it got there. But, if you MUST be a typical Bush supporter and not read this book, then fine. Just letting you know you're all going to miss out on a spectacular and thorough book. As it is a considerably short fact-book, I wouldn't use it as a main source of information regarding a particular dictator though, but it's a good way to start learning about what's going on around the world, BESIDES BUSH. Get it while it's hot!!

I always enjoyed this author's 10 worst dictators list published annually in PARADE magazine; so when his book came out I picked it up. Very interesting read. With every dictator the author is sure to give a history of the country so we can understand how the political and economic climate of these countries allow people like these to rise to power. This book sheds light on not only the obvious dictators from countries like North Korea and Sudan, but also the less known ones out of countries like Syria and Burma. The addition of Bush is an interesting choice. He is not even close to being as evil as any of the others on the list; but he has instituted policies that take away the rights of his own citizens. The addition of Hugo Chavez would have been a good. Overall, this book is a good read.

Overall, it is a good book. But I have a few complaints. George Bush shouldn't be in here. He is not the 20 worst dictators alive, but he should not be a bonus either. Those who hate Bush should blame Osama because Bush responded to the 9-11 attacks. For a bonus, I would have picked Mengistu Haile Mariam because he was a dictator, but he is no longer in power, which is why he is

not included in the 20 worst ones alive. He killed almost 1.5 million Ethiopians and deserves a spot in this book. Also Omar should not be number one. Kim Jong-il and Robert Mugabe are a lot worse and have caused a lot more suffering.

This book was an excellent and concise account of the histories of some of the most fascinating countries in the world and of the horrific men who unfortunately rule them. Many of the dictators presented here, along with their political machines, are still in power, rule with an iron fist, insist that democracy (at least, not as we in America would prefer it) is 'not for them', and routinely baffle the world with fake elections and false representations of its most vulnerable citizens (the Woman's Council in Saudi Arabia is made up of mostly men, with a male chairperson.) The author is unafraid to expose these men for who they are--power hungry and even sick, but then also explains how these sometimes brutal leaders came to be this way, and why their reputations are as deserved as they are. And not all despots are alike--Pervez Musharraf seems to be a more or less civil man compared to others. The reader understands the context through which each of these men is presented, and hopefully one understands why G.W. Bush is in it as well. It's not that this country is not incapable of becoming a dictatorship, but politicians--even American ones--can and do use methods of skating around public scrutiny as a matter of course. Mr. Bush, like so many other presidents, used existing circumstances to enact his and others' agendas on the side. This book is recommended for anyone who wishes to understand the reality of these men, the countries they came to dominate, and the often sinister methods of forcing a people down an often deadly path for decades. One might hope that, in this more educated and pragmatic period of the 21st century, the long era of the dictator is nearing its end. After Gaddafi's fall, for example, it is a very real hope indeed.

The book is actually pretty good except for the inclusion of the "special case." Perhaps the author would like to put out a 2nd edition with a "special-special case" about our current president. Including the IRS targeting of opposition groups, which is a classic tactic of ALL true dictators, and say what you will about the patriot act, but it was fully authorized by congress and up for continual renewal every 90 days to curb abuse, which is A LOT more than you can say for the current NSA data collection which is going on; secretly, at-will, totally illegal and with no congressional approval or oversight. After reading this book and a few others, I'm struck by an odd phenomenon among tyrants. If you suppress and murder your own people, the rest of the world really doesn't care until it's too late, but if you invade another country (for whatever reason) you immediately become Satan.

I see a strange contrast between Bush and Obama here, in obviously milder forms. To tell you the truth, it would be a disgrace to put any US president in a book like this. I have no doubt though that if this were written in the 70's, Nixon would be the "special case"...go even farther back FDR and Lincoln might even appear. Both did take considerable executive control during tumultuous times, in comparison Bush's acts after 9/11 were very mild. Just as people tend to forget the apparent "abuses" of Lincoln or FDR and look upon both as great leaders now, I have a feeling Bush will be vindicated by history & little (and big) jabs in books like these will become mere footnotes in a half century. P.S. If you can stomach the "special case", by all means pick up this book.....it totally ruined it for me though, hence the rating.

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